

MEMORANDUM FOR:

FROM :

SUBJECT : Sub-Career Service for Agency Records  
Management Personnel

1. A career service for Agency Records Management Personnel has been discussed many times over the past two decades with nothing happening. Once again the subject has arisen, and a formal paper was prepared on the pros and cons of a career service. In digesting the paper it appears that the old adage "from here you can't make it" is most evident.

2. The need for a career service is long past - what is needed is a strong charter for a complete Records program as required by law and with the backing of top management to get the Records Management job done and produce results. This charter and program should outline the framework for an Agency-wide organization involving every Directorate. Implications of this charter are support and follow through on all aspects of records management at all levels. Continue to have the leadership and guidance by the central staff with each Directorate to carry out the charter through a Directorate Records Management Officer. This can be accomplished just as well without a Career Service being especially dedicated. Leave the advent of a career service to the Directorates if they so opt.

3. Of course, no one is so naive to believe that just because we have a career service or a charter on paper that everything will automatically be perfect. Quite the contrary, "Murphy's Law" will always be in effect. There must be a basic attitude change on the part of management regarding the position of records management in the organizational structure. Considering the nature of Records management today, and especially in the Agency, it is puzzling that the function is looked at as a "necessary evil" by many of our managers.

4. The question, "should we have a separate career service for Agency records management personnel" should be changed to "what would a separate career service for Agency records management personnel do for the Agency." There lies the problem, are we thinking of a career service as providing an advancement for records officers or are we thinking of a career service as providing the Agency with a group of people to get the job done.

TAT 5.  speaks of records management specialists in the MG career service as being a problem. Even in a dedicated career service of records management officers there would be opportunity for the same conditions, i.e., Records Managers versus Archivists; Staff Level versus Branch Level, etc.

6. One major problem which has been overlooked is the lack of planned training for records people regardless of the career service they report to. Our own MG career service is a very

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good example, the Generalists have their career as well as the training needed planned for them, when have the "specialists" had their careers or training planned for them. Even more important when did I last hear of a "specialist" being interviewed? There is more than just establishing a career service there must be reaction for the people in the service.

7. One last remark, I disagree with  recommendation ST that specialists should not be ranked or considered for promotion with generalists in the MG sub-career service. Ten out of a possible 16 professionals "specialist" has been promoted since 1973. At no other period of time have the "specialists" fared this well.

*Cat's Paper*

STAT  
RESPONSE TO THE 10 AUGUST 1976 MEMORANDUM STUDY OF CMO/DDA  
PREPARED BY [REDACTED], SUBJECT: SUB-CAREER SERVICE  
FOR AGENCY RECORDS MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

It is the understanding of this careerist that recently the situation in the Career Service (MG) is that generalists and specialists are rated with no distinction between them and that specialists have fared better than they ever have before. The fact that records managers in some cases chose not to join this Career Service at the time it was created is the reason there is such a difference in these jobs today. If this is the case, a limited or separate Career Service will not accomplish anything and it might even revert back to the times when specialists were not advanced at a comparable ratio with generalists. It was my initial opinion that an Agency-wide Career Service for Records Management Officers could be an improvement. I can only base this opinion on comments from others who feel they are locked into their current positions with no further chance of advancement and my own situation where advancement and reassignment possibilities are there but nothing has happened since I joined the MG Career Service. I have, therefore, decided that a new Career Service may not be the answer, the answer lies in improving the existing MG Career Service. Its closed door situation is a stifling status. I envision someday having a Career Service of one person. I feel that this type of organization should have an open door policy for new blood and for lateral moves should those who originally chose not to join feel it would be to their advantage to change their minds. This is especially true where incumbents in positions have changed or the situation has changed. Closing the door to old timers and slipping in new hires could create an equal opportunity problem.

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I strongly believe that Records Management Officers should not be part-time, I firmly believe that one RMO can handle more than one area depending on location and complexity. If the latter is adopted, the supervision would have to come from the central Staff or the Directorate RMO. This would eliminate one office having greater influence over the RMO handling more than one office. Centralized supervision without a separated new Career Service may be more beneficial.

Before anything is done, the records management people should be asked again to respond on this to see if they actually want it. They should have all the benefits and disadvantages presented to them to make their decisions. Like myself, they should be informed how the Career Service is doing things today to dispel adverse experiences from the past. Situations such as the DDI/RMO bypassing the RMO's because they are part-timers, not well trained and unfamiliar in all phases of records management should be remedied. This situation benefits no one.

The training records of records managers should be studied to see what these people are lacking and see to it that plans are made for them to get what they need. There should be a training curriculum established for RMO's and a requirement to fulfil the basic courses within the first eighteen months of their career. There should be closer attention to this program than simply depending on RMO's checking the OTR Training Catalog. Certain training courses should be required qualifications for the positions occupied. There should be closer followup after training is completed to determine if it is being applied and reasons if it is not used.

All Careerists should be interviewed at least annually to keep abreast of progress, attitudes, and situations. It can be considered a form of preventive medicine.

I feel it is wrong as far as career development programs are concerned to label anyone "junior". The grade of their occupied position takes that into consideration. The career program should encourage unlimited opportunity according to ability without the barrier of "junior" slowing them down.

Conclusion: Try a little harder to improve the Career Service we already have, open its doors again, insist on closer contact with the careerists other than just problem cases, establishing a more closely monitored training program, and enhance its reputation to entice people to want to belong.